



Minister
Responsible
for Disabled
Persons

Ministre
délégué aux
personnes
handicapées

700 Bay Street
3rd Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1Z6
(416) 965-5678

700, rue Bay
3^e étage
Toronto (Ontario)
M5G 1Z6
(416) 965-5678

September 19, 1988

Mr. Chris Brown
1102 - 258 Lisgar Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0C9

Dear Mr. Brown:

This is in response to the telephone calls you have made to my office and to Mr. Jon Boynton of the Office for Disabled Persons. You raise a number of concerns related to the issues around environmental hypersensitivity.

Specifically, you believe the Minister of Health should provide official government recognition that environmental hypersensitivity is a disability and that this should be done by means of a public statement. Further, the Minister should inform her staff that the issue is one which is to be taken seriously.

To address these points first, I would say that the Minister of Health has already undertaken a number of initiatives which reflect her concern with this issue. As I mentioned in my July 12 letter, two major reports, the Thompson Report and the Zimmerman Report were prepared by the Ministry of Health. Both recommended that more research is needed to identify the nature and scope of this problem. You no doubt are aware that it is essential that the government have this information and that there be some measure of medical consensus before any form of official recognition can be made.

The Minister of Health, again as I mentioned in my July 12 letter, is planning to support a substantial body of research. A number of projects are already underway. Researchers are working with the Peel Housing Authority to determine the needs of environmentally hypersensitive individuals as they relate to housing. The Ministry of Health staff are working with the Toronto Board of Education on the effects of mold in ventilating systems. A researcher at the University of Toronto is investigating food sensitivities. Also at the University of Toronto, the effect of a rotation diet on behaviour is being investigated. The Minister of Health is also in the process of creating an advisory committee for research. This committee

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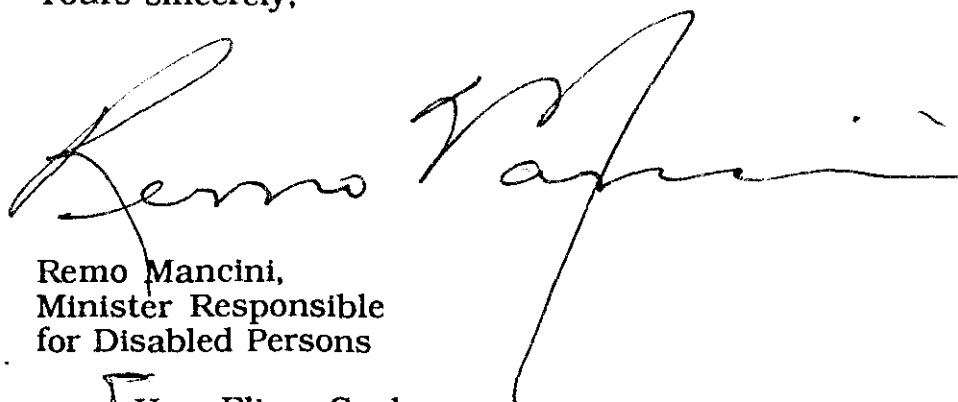
will have representatives from the university community, as well as consumer groups.

(3) You also expressed the belief that the government should make restitution to individuals and to families who have suffered either personally, or as the result of losing a family member. As you are no doubt aware, environmental hypersensitivity covers a wide range of ailments. Before any consideration of restitution could be entertained by the responsible body (whichever that might be) it would be necessary to determine the nature of both the ailment and the environmental hazard, the source of the contaminant and the responsible body. Any consideration for accepting liability and setting up a process for restitution by any government body would clearly have to be firmly medically based. At present, there is no such body of knowledge.

The Ministry of Health is consulting in an ongoing way with the community group AGES. I understand that you no longer believe your concerns are represented by them. Ms. Anna Rose Spina of the Ministry of Health (416-963-1137) invites you to advise the Ministry of Health, personally, if you so desire. I also understand that you have been in continuous dialogue with her for some time. Ms. Spina has also offered to keep you informed of the Ministry's ongoing initiatives.

Finally, let me say that I am satisfied that the government is concerned about, and is taking appropriate steps to address the issue of environmental hypersensitivity. I will continue to address this problem as one which affects the ability of disabled individuals to realize their full potential.

Yours sincerely,



Remo Mancini,
Minister Responsible
for Disabled Persons

cc: [Hon. Elinor Caplan
Minister of Health

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